

Debate continues on graduation requirements for class of 2018

Following review and discussion of recommendations made by a graduation requirements workgroup formed by the state superintendent, the State Board of Education passed a resolution asking the legislature to take into consideration the workgroup's specific recommendations and to provide the State Board flexibility to develop alternative pathways to graduation for the class of 2018.

Under current law, students have three pathways to receiving a diploma: by earning a cumulative passing score of 18 points on seven end-of-course exams (in Algebra I and geometry, or integrated math I and II; biology; American history and American government; and, English I and II); by earning 12 points through a State Board-approved industry-recognized credential or group of credentials and achieving a workforce readiness score in the WorkKeys assessment; or, by earning a remediation-free score in English language arts and math on a nationally recognized college admission exam (including the ACT and SAT).

According to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), about two-thirds of high school juniors are likely to score the minimum 18 (of 35) points required on end-of-course exams. Alarm over the potential of withholding diplomas from up to one-third of students who comprise the class of 2018 has prompted discussion among policy-makers – including the State Board – on the need for alternative pathways for one year only.

If the legislature approves the State Board's request, students who failed to achieve the required number of points could still be eligible to receive diplomas by meeting at least three of six other conditions:

- ◆ A senior year attendance rate of 93 percent;
- ◆ A 2.5 grade point average for senior classes;
- ◆ Completion of a senior capstone project;
- ◆ Completion of 120 hours of work or community service (including internships and apprenticeships);
- ◆ Completion of a College Credit Plus course; and,
- ◆ Completion of an International Baccalaureate of Advanced Placement course and earning a score of 4 on a related IB exam or a 3 on a related AP exam.

Career technical students could earn a diploma by scoring proficient or better on career-tech program end-of-course exams or test modules, earning credentials, or having 250 hours of workplace participation.

It seems likely that the legislature will take action to address the problem of low graduation rates for the class of 2018 through the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 49) currently under consideration.

Access the State Board resolution online at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Media/Ed-Connection/April-17-2017/State-Board-of-Education-recommends-additional-hig>

